

DATELINE #57 NEW YORK CITY
SIDNEY PAUL

JANUARY 21, 1976

WALKING ON WATER
(VOICED PIECE AND INSERTS IN TAPE LIBRARY)

AND NOW, THE VOICE OF AMERICA PRESENTS ...DATELINE...

ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF PROGRAMS ABOUT PEOPLE AND PLACES IN THE UNITED STATES. TODAY, OUR DATELINE IS NEW YORK CITY WHERE SIDNEY PAUL WAS OUT IN A TUGBOAT RECENTLY, WATCHING A MAN WALK ON THE WATER OF THE HUDSON RIVER AND THEN SENDING THIS REPORT:

THE DREAM OF MILLIONS OF COMMUTERS BETWEEN NEW JERSEY AND NEW YORK TODAY TOOK ON SOME SEMBLANCE OF REALITY. UNITED STATES ARMY SERGEANT WALTER ROBINSON NEARLY COMPLETE A ONE POINT SIX KILOMETER (ONE MILE) CROSSING OF THE HUDSON RIVER, WALKING ON THE SURFACE IN WHAT HE CALLS HIS "WATER SHOES." THERE WERE MASSIVE PIECES OF ICE IN THE RIVER THAT COULD HAVE PUNCTURED HIS "SHOES" -- SO HE STOPPED ABOUT NINETY METERS (ONE HUNDRED YARDS) SHORT OF HIS GOAL.

SERGEANT ROBINSON IS A CARPENTER IN THE ARMY, AND AN INVENTOR IN PRIVATE LIFE. HE ATTEMPTED TO CROSS THE HUDSON TO PUBLICIZE HIS INVENTION WHICH HE IS CURRENTLY EXHIBITING AT NEW YORK CITY'S NATIONAL BOAT SHOW. HE CLAIMS THE INVENTION CAN BE USED IN THREE WAYS -- FOR RECREATION, IN INDUSTRY -- SUCH AS IN FIGHTING OIL SLICKS -- AND IN THE MILITARY BECAUSE MACHINE GUNS CAN EVEN BE FIRED FROM ATOP THE "SHOES."

NARR: THE SERGEANT CALLS HIS BRAIN CHILD "WATER SHOES" -- BUT
(CONT'D) IT LOOKS LIKE A RAFT. IT CONSISTS OF TWO FIBERGLASS AIR-
FILLED MATTRESSES -- EACH AS LONG AS A MAN'S BODY AND
AS WIDE AS HIS SHOULDERS. THE "SHOES" ARE STRAPPED
TOGETHER SIDE BY SIDE, AND TOPPED BY COTTON POLYESTER
COVERS. TWO ALUMINUM RODS SEWN LENGTHWISE IN EACH
MATTRESS PREVENT THE "SHOES" FROM BUCKLING. STANDING
ON TOP OF THIS -- WITH HIS FEET ABSOLUTELY FREE -- SERGEANT
ROBINSON PROPELLED HIMSELF WITH TWO ALUMINUM OARS, EACH
OF WHICH HAD A SPECIAL GRIP COVERING THE FOREARM. TOTAL
WEIGHT OF THE "SHOES" WAS ABOUT ELEVEN KILOGRAMS (TWENTY-
FIVE POUNDS).

HE STARTED ON THE NEW JERSEY SIDE OF THE HUDSON, WITH
THREE PEOPLE FOLLOWING HIM IN A SMALL MOTOR BOAT. MOVING
DOWNSTREAM -- IN SUB-FREEZING WEATHER-- SERGEANT ROBINSON
BUCKED A SLIGHT CURRENT. FOR ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES,
HE DID WELL -- EVEN PULLING OVER TO THE TUGBOAT OCCASIONALLY
AND JOKING WITH REPORTERS. BUT, SUDDENLY, ABOUT FIFTEEN
MINUTES FROM HIS NEW YORK LANDING, MASSIVE ICE FLOES
APPEARED. HE SKIRTED AROUND THEM AND DROPPED BACK BEHIND
THE TUGBOAT FOR SAFETY. FINALLY, HE DECIDED HE HAD PROVED
HIS POINT -- AND HEAVED HIMSELF INTO THE MOTOR BOAT.

SERGEANT ROBINSON WAS NOT DISAPPOINTED IN HIS PERFORMANCE.
HE REMINDED REPORTERS THAT HE ALREADY HOLDS A WORLD RECORD
ON HIS "SHOES"-- SOME YEARS AGO HE CROSSED THE PANAMA
CANAL -- FROM THE PACIFIC TO THE ATLANTIC SIDE -- A
DISTANCE OF EIGHTY-NINE KILOMETERS (FIFTY-SIX MILES).

NARR: WE ASKED SERGEANT ROBINSON IF HE WAS WORKING ON ANY OTHER
(CONT'D) INVENTIONS:

TAPE: ACTUALITY -- ROBINSON

"WE'RE ALSO WORKING ON AN 'ORNATHOPTER,' WHICH IS A BIRD-LIKE APPARATUS, A MECHANICAL BIRD -- IN OTHER WORDS, THE WINGS FLAP JUST LIKE A BIRD -- AND YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF OF FLAT LAND AND LAND ON FLAT LAND -- THAT'S ONE PERSON USING JUST HIS BODY MUSCLES."

NARR: IF THE SERGEANT EVER DEMONSTRATES HIS "ORNATHOPTER" AT THE NEW YORK AIR SHOW, YOUR REPORTER WILL BE STANDING BY.

ANNCR: THE STORY OF A MAN WHO ALREADY CAN WALK ON WATER AND IS MAKING PLANS TO FLY LIKE A BIRD. YOU HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO DATELINE ...ANOTHER IN THE SERIES OF VOICE OF AMERICA PROGRAMS REPORTING ON PEOPLE, PLACES AND EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES. NEXT WEEK (AT THIS TIME) ANOTHER DATELINE FROM SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE UNITED STATES.
THIS IS -----.

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RC/CAK